



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Contact: Mike Louisell (360) 902-1813

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560
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WSDA issues fines for pesticide-use violations for 1st Quarter

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) issued fines totaling \$1,500 and imposed license suspensions during the first quarter of 2012 for violations of state pesticide laws and rules. Fines ranged from \$300 to \$800 for incidents that occurred in Chelan, Pierce and Spokane counties.

Among the concluded cases were incidents of not following label precautions for roadside applications, causing damage to nearby trees; conducting an inspection for wood destroying organisms without the proper license, insurance and filing of inspection report; and allowing pesticide to drift onto a county highway, exposing two persons on a passing motorcycle. WSDA completed investigations and issued fines or license suspensions as follows:

David Twitchell, Pests-Or-Us, Inc., Wenatchee. WSDA alleged David Twitchell did not properly follow pesticide label precautions when making an herbicide application along a private road near Malaga in April 2011. The herbicide damaged nearby trees. As a result of a Director's Default Order, Twitchell paid \$300.

Ara Putz, USA Home & Pest Inspection, LLC, Tacoma. WSDA alleged that in June 2011, Ara Putz improperly conducted a wood destroying organism (WDO) inspection in Lakewood. Putz did not have a valid WSDA pesticide license to conduct the inspection nor did he follow WDO reporting requirements. The matter was resolved when Putz agreed to pay \$400.

Dan Faunce, Faunce Aviation, LLC, Spokane. WSDA alleged that in May 2011, while making an aerial fungicide application to blue grass in southern Spokane County, Faunce allowed spray to drift onto an adjacent county highway. At the same time, two passing motorcycle riders were exposed to the off target drift. The matter was resolved when Faunce agreed to pay \$800 and accept a ten-day license suspension in September 2012.

Penalty matrix used by WSDA to levy fines and suspensions

A penalty matrix is used to ensure penalties are uniform and fair. The matrix takes into account the seriousness of the violation, whether it is a first or a repeat offense, and whether there are any aggravating or mitigating factors involved. Larger penalties often reflect repeat offenses or multiple violations within the same incident.

WSDA enforces state and federal laws to protect people, property and the environment against the improper use of pesticides. Staff also provides technical assistance to the pesticide industry and consumers,

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and enforces the rules on structural inspections for wood destroying organisms, such as wood rot, carpenter ants or termites. The agency registers more than 12,000 pesticide products, licenses about 22,000 pesticide applicators, dealers, consultants and structural pest inspectors.

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